ADVICE for the

Prevention of Theft.

Being a ſhort Account of the

Confeſſion and Diſcovery

Which was made by a

Condemned Priſoner,

Who was Executed the 25th. of *May*, 1687.

TO

William Smythies,

Curate of St. *Giles Cripplegate.*

I Have been often deſir'd to viſit the Condemn'd Priſoners; and have heard ſome paſſages, which I could have wiſht had been publiſht for the prevention of Miſchief to many Perſons and Families, but was unwilling to be the Pen-man of them; well knowing what Cenſures many Men lye under, for doing thoſe things which were deſigned for the Good of others. I have therefore viſited ſome Perſons, both in the City and ſome adjacent places, who have been accuſed by Condemned Malefactors, as moſt deſtructive *Abetters* and *Entertainers* of them and other Robbers: And I have ſome reaſon to hope it was with good Succeſs.

I was under a Special Obligation, to attend upon a young Man who was Executed yesterday, in the Prime and Strength of his years: And being satisfied, that what he said was True, and that it proceeded from a great Sense which he had of his deplorable Condition; I am willing to adventure the publication of some Discoveries he made to me, which tend to the reforming of some Mens Lives, and the securing of other Mens Goods and Properties.

It was his earnest Desire, at the time of his Execution, That all, *Young Men especially*, should take Warning by him, that they avoid the Company of those who lay wait to ensnare them: That in order to it, they should take care they mispend not the Lord's day, and (especially) that they entertain not wicked Company, by which they become the Servants of the Devil, when they should be serving GOD in His publick Worship; which is the common in-let of all wickedness, and one of the first Steps towards that dismal End which he brought to himself. I do not know that ever I observ'd any Repentance in a Condemn'd Malefactor, who did not bitterly lament his Neglect of his Duty to God on that Day. Those young Persons who make the Lord's day a day of Idleness, little think what Advantage they give the Tempter, by degrees, to make that, and all other, to be days of Wickedness. He acknowledged, that there is no Pleasure, but in a Sober and Religious Life; and that the ways of Wickedness do not only tend to the Destruction of Soul and Body, but are the occasions of such Fears and Perplexities, as out-weigh all the Profit of Ungodliness. And that is not all, but they bring most intolerably-wounding Grief and Sorrow to tender Parents; which was a great aggravation of his Trouble; and occasion'd his earnest Request, that all good Christians would pray to God to comfort his Religious Father and Mother, who had in all respects discharged their Duties of Love towards him: And I am sure there is great need of such Prayers. These Considerations had prevailed with him to avoid all ill Company, for the space of a Moneth (or more) before he was taken; and if he had escaped this Sentence, it is very probable, that he would have changed the Course of his Actions. *Early Piety* is the best Security against all Evils. *Young Men* may chuse the Fear of God, and his easie and pleasant *Yoke*, but if they break loose, and begin an Ungodly Life, they can not tell to what Degree of Wickedness they shall encrease,

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creaſe; when they ſhall come off from it, or at what time the Judgment of God will overtake them.

But my deſign is not now to enlarge upon thoſe Arguments which hardned Minds can reſiſt, though they come from Dying Men, when in the Bitterneſs of their Souls; And therefore ſhall proceed to that which may alarm Houſe-keepers, to beware of Thieves, whoſe numbers are ſo great, that another Condemn'd Malefactor told me it is impoſſible they can ever be ſuppreſt: And that there is an incredible number of Boys and Girles that are train'd up by thoſe that are skilful in that Myſtery of wickedneſs. I think he ſaid there were ſome Hundreds.

This young Man told me of ſome Houſes which have been lately robb'd by Day-Thieves, who have all ſorts and ſizes of Pick-Locks, by which they can unlock any Door, Trunk, or Cabinet, and lock them again with ſuch expedition, that the Perſon injured ſhall conclude that it muſt be done by Servants, or other Inhabitants with them, and not by thoſe that come only as Gueſts to their Houſes. I was likewiſe inform'd by another, that they do not value any Lock that is made in *England*; and therefore adviſed me to faſten my Doors with Barrs or Bolts.

[illegible] call'd to mind ſome Houſes which were robb'd by his Acquaintance, of which I make particular mention, that Innocent Perſons have been accus'd, of which [illegible] was concern'd in one very remarkable inſtance. There [illegible] priſon'd for One Hundred Pounds, which a Condemn'd Malefactor told me he had ſtolen. One of them is a Victualling-Houſe in *Alderſgate-ſtreet*, at the going into *Falcon-yard*. Another is a Victualling-Houſe within *Aldgate*, into which there is a Paſſage through a long Entry, near *Northumberland-Alley*. A Third is a Cook's Houſe near the *Ar*[illegible] the paſſage out of *Lincolns-Inn-Fields* towards *Drury-Lane*.

He likewiſe inform'd me of three Houſes, which a Man and Woman intend to robb, and have made ſome attempt, but were prevented, by going at a time when there was Company in other Rooms. One is the *Red Bull* in *Shoe-Lane*: Another is the *Chequer* without *Aldgate*, on the Butchers-ſide of the Street: The third is a Cook without *Biſhops-gate*, near the *Katherine-Wheel*, directly oppoſite to a yard, where there was a Robbery not long ſince committed: I hope that this publication may prevent it.

He likewiſe told me, that there was a Thief brought into *Newgate* on *Saturday* laſt, who was taken at the Sign of King *James* in or near *Spittle-Fields*; and that if the Miſtris of the Houſe hath loſt ſo much Money as ſhe pretended, ſhe may find it by emptying her Vault.

I may likewiſe give a Caution to the Gentry who live in *Lincolns-Inn-Fields*, to which the Thieves have a great reſort. It hath been uſual with them to go in at Seven or Eight of the Clock in the Evening, and to go up the Stairs, where they take what they find, and carry it away without being diſcovered. If they happen to meet any perſon, they ask for a Lodger or Servant by Name; and when they are told that there is none ſuch, they beg pardon, and ſay, that they miſtook the Houſe. It is almoſt unimaginable, that there ſhould be ſo many bold Attempts paſs undiſcovered as he mention'd, that he knew of, though he could not exactly remember the Houſes.

I hope it will be granted, that I have publiſht this for a *General* as well as a *Particular Good*. And that thoſe who keep Houſes of *Entertainment* will either be cautious of their Gueſts, or commit their Money, and moſt valuable Goods, to the Cuſtody of a private Houſe-keeper. It is, it ſeems, uſual for Thieves to [illegible]cy, for the diſpatch of a Writing, or ſome other urgent [illegible] and whilſt one looks to the Stairs, the other make ha[illegible]ther parts of the Houſe, eſpecially into thoſe Rooms th[illegible] ſame Floor.

That this publication may anſwer the End for wh[illegible]s made, is the deſire of

Cripplegate, May the 26th. 1687.

W. Smythies.

Licenſed, May *the* 26. 1687. *Ro. L' Eſtrange.*

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